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ABSTRACT

This mini-packet is designed to help school districts that are writing an educational philosophy as part of the Local Planning and Assessment Process (LPAP). There are two basic uses for the mini-packet: to acquaint teachers and the lay public with what developing an educational philosophy will require and to guide a committee in writing an educational philosophy. There are various methods by which an educational philosophy can be written; the method a district chooses should be the one it is most comfortable working with. This mini-packet outlines a nine-activity approach to writing a philosophy. Criteria that can be used in evaluating an educational philosophy are listed, possible "contents" are described, and two sample school philosophies are presented. (Author/IRT)

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LPAP MINI-PACKET
ESTABLISHING AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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EA 010 535

Prepared For:

BUREAU OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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NOTES TO PRESENTERS:

1. This mini-packet is designed for presentation with transparencies supplied in a separate package. The transparencies are numbered in order of their use and the appropriate point in the text for their display is indicated: (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY .)

2. Presenters wishing to duplicate the educational philosophy development sections of this mini-packet in order to distribute only that portion to their audiences or committees are referred to the following pages:

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LPAP MINI-PACKET: ESTABLISHING AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

This mini-packet is designed to help school districts which are writing an educational philosophy. It is intended for use with both general audiences and with the committee who will formulate a district's educational philosophy statement. There are two basic uses for the mini-packet. The first use is informational. It is expected that initially an administrator will use the packet to acquaint teachers and the lay public with what developing an educational philosophy will require. Numerous lay and professional educational groups will no doubt be interested in learning how a district's philosophy will be prepared. This information can be given by describing the contents of this mini-packet and showing the accompanying transparencies to illustrate and highlight key points. The second use of this mini-packet is to guide a committee in writing an educational philosophy.

There are various methods by which an educational philosophy can be written. It should be emphasized that the method a district chooses to employ should be the one it is most comfortable working with. This mini-packet outlines a series of activities that can be undertaken to write an educational philosophy. Criteria are listed which can be used in evaluating an educational philosophy, possible "contents" are described, and two sample school philosophies are presented.

This mini-packet was developed by the Curriculum Research and Development Center of the University of Rhode Island for the Bureau of Technical Assistance and reviewed in its draft form by Rhode Island local school district personnel.

LPAP MINI-PACKET: ESTABLISHING AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

There are different methods by which a school philosophy can be written. One such method, involving nine activities, is presented here. Where appropriate, alternative activities are described. Each school district should select a method with which it feels most comfortable. Each of the activities should be completed in a timely fashion. The following summarizes the nine activities and key points concerning each of them. (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 1.)

	Key Points
Activity 1 - Presentation	Present to as many groups as possible.
Activity 2 - Select a Committee	Request volunteers at presentations, through newspaper ads. Hold committee orientation.
Activity 3 - Work Session I	Try to complete Activities 3 and 4 in two meetings.
Activity 4 - Work Session II	Work for thorough understanding in one meeting if at all possible.
Activity 5 - Preparing a First Draft	Selection of an appropriate method is critical.
Activity 6 - Publication of Draft	Disseminate as widely as possible.
Activity 7 - Community Meeting	Encourage diverse opinions.
Activity 8 - Preparation of Final Draft	Arrive at committee concensus.
Activity 9 - Review and Revision	Be prepared to revise when the need arises.

Each of these activities is described in detail below. Included for each activity are three components:

(1) the objective for each activity,

(2) the group or individual responsible for conducting the activity,

(3) the steps to be accomplished to complete the activity.

ACTIVITY 1 - PRESENTATION

Objective: To describe fully to all interested audiences the process by which an educational philosophy can be written.

Responsible: The superintendent of schools or his designee

Activity 1 - Steps to be taken:

(1) Notify all local educationally-concerned groups (e.g., teachers' association, parent groups) and local civic groups that a presentation can be made if the group is interested.

(2) Arrange for a meeting place and an overhead projector and screen.

(3) Become completely familiar with this LPAP Mini-Packet, "Establishing an Educational Philosophy," and the transparencies which accompany it.

(4) Using the transparencies when appropriate, describe contents of "Establishing an Educational Philosophy" to the audience.

(5) Conclude the presentation by asking for questions and discussion.

(6) Request that people volunteer for the philosophy committee.

ACTIVITY 2 - SELECTION OF A PHILOSOPHY COMMITTEE

Objective: To select a broadly representative educational philosophy committee with one individual designated as chairperson.

Responsible: The superintendent of schools or his designee

Activity 2 - Steps to be taken:

(1) Select a committee.

There are three ways a committee may be selected.

(A) An all volunteer committee is formed following a publicity campaign about the committee and its function.

(B) Districts which have begun the LPAP process may have an established mechanism for committee selection or an existing committee.

(C) A "blue ribbon" committee representing all educationally involved segments of the community may be named by the school superintendent or school committee.

(2) Select a chairperson. There are two ways this may be accomplished.

(A) An individual can be elected by the committee.

(B) The superintendent or his designee may be named as the chairperson.

(3) Hold a committee orientation meeting to allow the members to get acquainted and determine procedures they will use in functioning as a group; e.g., means of communication, how decisions will be reached, etc.

The size of the committee will vary from district to district. It should be composed of seven to fifteen members. Seven members is probably the minimum number to insure broad community representation. More than 15 members will probably make the committee unworkably large. Committees tend to function best if they are composed of an odd number of people. Ideally, the committee will represent all segments of the community. LPAP provisional regulations state that philosophy and goals be established "...through professional staff participation and through broad public involvement." (Section 2.12, page 4) Broad representation can be assured by sending a letter to identified groups requesting that a representative be named or requesting time at a meeting of the group to make a presentation and then request representation. Working closely with local newspapers is essential for enlisting volunteers and for informing the community of the committee's progress.

If the committee is to be productive, it is important that the individual selected as chairperson have group leadership skills. This person should have strengths in identifying issues, clarifying points, summarizing and synthesizing the exchanges in the meetings, and extracting cooperation among group members in keeping the meetings task-oriented.

The committee orientation meeting named in step three should be an opportunity for the group to (1) establish rapport among themselves,

(2) receive an overview of what they will be doing as a committee, and (3) determine the intragroup mechanisms they will use to accomplish their tasks. The chairperson should select a group "ice-breaker" activity for the group to use in getting to know one another. He or she may also want to describe some group work techniques from which the committee could select one to use as a starting point for Activity 3 - Work Session I. Examples of such techniques are the nominal and Delphi processes.[1] The nominal sequence could be adapted to assist in generating ideas for the text of the philosophy statement or for systematic reviews of the draft.

The sequence is as follows: (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 2.)

1. The members silently express their ideas in writing. The members may work alone in separate rooms or around a table in full view of each other.

2. At the end of some time period (10 to 15 minutes), the members share their ideas with each other. This sharing is very structured in that each member presents, in round-robin fashion, only one idea in each round from her or his list.

3. In full view of all members, a recorder writes a short and paraphrased version of each idea on a flip chart or board. This continues until all ideas, possibly eighteen to twenty-five, have been expressed. There is no recorded identification of ideas with members.

4. Each idea is then openly discussed by asking for clarification or stating support or nonsupport of it.

5. Each member privately and in writing rank-orders the ideas in order of preference. The group decision or recommendation would be the mathematically-pooled outcomes of the member rankings of each idea.

This approach offers several advantages over the usual interacting group:

1. more emphasis on idea generation;

2. more attention for each idea; and

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[1] Delbecq, A.L., A.H. van de Ven, and D.H. Gustafson, Group Techniques for Program Planning: A Guide to Nominal and Delphi Processes. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company. 1975.

3. more likelihood of balanced participation and representation of each member in the group.

In this meeting the group should specifically plan its timeline for completion. It is recommended that the group try to complete Activities 3 through 8 in three months. This will require frequent meetings. Regular, biweekly meetings are probably most likely to result in sufficient time between meetings for members to accomplish individual assignments. Weekly meetings may be necessary sometimes. A schedule similar to the following could be generated.
(DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 3.)

In addition to a timeline the group may want to agree on what will be an effective meeting length for each of their sessions. Two hours with an option, on group vote, to extend a maximum of one half hour will give the group a clear idea of the total time commitment they are making to the process and give them some goals for accomplishment that will facilitate the task orientation of the meetings.

The chairperson may wish to raise a few questions concerning the philosophy the committee will adopt regarding its own operation. Will it insist on a consensus model for decision-making? Do the members prefer a perspective that essentially says "This isn't perfect, yet it has a number of positive elements we've been hoping to incorporate. Can we live with it?"

ACTIVITY 3 - WORK SESSION I

Objective: Each committee member will understand the contents of "Establishing an Educational Philosophy," especially the philosophical and educational concepts.

Responsible: The committee chairperson

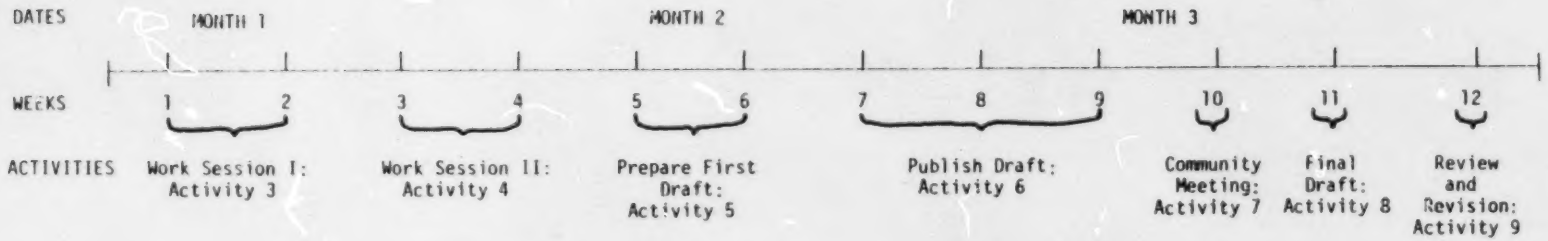
Activity 3 - Steps to be taken:

(1) Present Definitions and Background for establishing an educational philosophy.

Timeline for Committee Activities

Total Time for Developing a Philosophy Statement:

Three Months



Definitions and Background for Establishing a Philosophy

The suggested activities outlined in this Mini-Packet give a mechanism for developing and adopting an educational philosophy. They do not, however, provide information about what might be the substance of a philosophy statement. This section of the packet includes:

- a very brief background on the issues that are typically considered in formulating a philosophy of education;
- a suggested listing of criteria for judging a statement of educational philosophy; and
- two example statements of philosophy designed to reflect districts with different educational philosophies.

The issues which should be examined in developing an educational philosophy are twofold -- those which clarify basic philosophical concepts and those which delineate basic educational concepts. Employing a thoughtful process focusing on both these types of concepts should assure a district of a philosophy statement that does convey what the people of a district believe about education including their aspirations for education. RIDE has adopted the following definition as part of the Local Planning and Assessment Process (LPAP): (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 4.)

> A local school district's educational philosophy is "an expression of fundamental beliefs concerning the role of the school in the community."

It suggests that the task of a district is to identify the basic value system, i.e., these "fundamental beliefs," within that district

about what schools should be. These beliefs can then be used to guide educational practice.

(DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 5.)

> As an idealized expression of a district's value system concerning education, an educational philosophy provides the starting point for assessing needs and establishing goals for the schools.

A district's educational philosophy combines many points of view. In this sense it is a political document which makes legitimate divergent points of view much like the U.S. Constitution does.

(DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 6.)

> A district's statement of educational philosophy need not reflect complete agreement but should permit groups or individuals to develop additional, more specific statements of their own and consistent practices.

Also: (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 7.)

> A statement of educational philosophy does not mandate specific programs or practices; specific programs or practices, however, may be interpreted as being either consistent or inconsistent with it.

Activity 3 - Steps to be taken:

(2) Focus on <u>The Contents of a Philosophy Statement</u>.

The following limited discussions present only the more outstanding questions that arise in exploring the issues of basic philosophical concepts and basic educational concepts. Appendix B and Appendix C contain further elaboration on these issues. A district wishing to comprehensively define its beliefs is strongly encouraged to employ these appendices.

The Contents of a Philosophy Statement

In formulating a statement of educational philosophy, it is necessary first to consider what is the general philosophy of life to which we adhere. Beliefs about education's role within the context of our society will generate from this broader perspective.

The basic philosophic concepts that assign the reference points for beliefs about education center on our personal answers to questions about the nature of existence. (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 8.)

(1) Is reality fixed or changing?

(2) How is truth determined?

(3) Do people come to know through sense impressions, intuition, logic, or through the passing on of traditions?

(4) Who comprise society and do they function out of self-interest or for the common good?

(5) What is humankind's basic nature?

(6) What values does man possess and how are they determined?

(7) What should guide man's conduct, i.e., ethics, given the contexts established in points 1 through 6?

Discuss each of the seven terms allowing ample time for questions. Sample questions to open the discussion might be:

(a) What does reality mean to you?

(b) What are different ways reality can be defined?

When the individual committee members are satisfied that they understand the concepts, go on to Step 3.

Activity 3 - Steps to be taken:

(3) Focus on The Educational Concepts.

(DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 9.)

The basic educational concepts derive their definitions from the scope afforded by the philosophic concepts. They also are analyzed through a series of questions. These inquiries focus on education's occurrence within society:

1) What is the nature, i.e., meaning of, characteristics of education?

2) What is the scope, i.e., duration, necessary formality of education?

3) What are a district's responsibilities and limitations in providing education?

4) What is the cultural context which affects education?

5) Should the school be an agency of cultural stability and/or cultural change?

6) What should be the nature of the school's learning environment, i.e., its curriculum, its affective climate?

7) How can both the rights and the responsibilities of individuals and groups within the educational process be accommodated?

Discuss each of the seven terms allowing ample time for questions. Sample questions to open the discussion might be:

a) What does "the nature of education" mean to you?

b) What different kinds of schools and programs reflect different answers to questions posed?

When the individual committee members feel that they understand each of the seven terms, the objective has been accomplished.

The concepts delineated above comprise the heart of an educational philosophy statement. A district's individual response to the issues will yield a distinct statement embodying the community's values.

A district may wish to review its statement against some standard. The remaining sections of this Mini-Packet give a list of possible criteria to be used in determining a statement's accuracy and completeness, and example statements.

ACTIVITY 4 - WORK SESSION II

Objective: Each committee member will feel that he understands how philosophical statements can be translated into practices and programs.

Responsible: The committee chairperson

Activity 4 - Steps to be taken:

(1) Distribute copies of Sample Statements I and II.

SAMPLE STATEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY

Two short samples of educational philosophy statements for a school district are included on the following pages. Each district's own statement, of course, will embody the district's own decisions about content, form, and values. The samples are written in parallel form and cover approximately the same contents; however, they state different points of view about education and, in this sense, illustrate divergent value systems. The letters, numerals, and titles listed in the left-hand margin of each statement are references to the specific contents listed in Appendices C and D. A1-A7 are "Basic Philosophic Concepts." B1-B7 are "Basic Educational Concepts."

Activity 4 - Steps to be taken (continued):

(2) The chairperson reads Sample Statement I aloud. See page 15.

(3) Committee members check items on Worksheet I. (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 10.)

(4) Discuss each Worksheet item. There will be disagreement among committee members on each item. Ask members to identify wording in the statement to support their answers on the worksheet. Discuss and explain until each member can see why each item is consistent or inconsistent with the sample statement.

(5) Repeat items 2, 3, and 4 using Sample Statement II. See page 20.

WORKSHEET 1

DIRECTIONS:

Read each numbered item. Decide whether it is consistent or inconsistent with the statement just read and place a check on the appropriate blank. If you do not know or feel that the statement does not provide enough information to decide, place a check in the column.

	Sample Statement I			Sample Statement II		
	Consistent	Inconsistent	Don't Know	Consistent	Inconsistent	Don't Know
1. Individualized Instruction						
2. Homogeneous Grouping						
3. Values Clarification						
4. Criticism of Existing Political Institutions						
5. Competency Testing						
6. Affective Education						
7. Emphasis on Intramural Rather Than Varsity Athletics						
8. Powerful Student Council						
9. Student Choice of Curriculum						
10. Emphasis on Standardized Testing						
11. Independent Study						
12. Many Required Courses						
13. Learning by Reading Rather Than by Doing						
14. Student-Community Involvement						

SAMPLE PHILOSOPHY STATEMENTS

STATEMENT I

Philosophic Concepts

(A3 Knowledge)

(A2 Truth)

(A1 Reality)

(A7 Right Conduct)

(A4 Society)

Newtown School District believes that education is essentially a process of discovering and transmitting true knowledge about the nature of the universe, human beings, and how they should live. The principal responsibility of the school within this process is to select and effectively transmit knowledge which most adequately reflects the true and unchanging nature of reality. Such essential knowledge about basic principles of conduct and values, of science and art, and of logical thinking about the world provides the intellectual basis for complete human development. The first task of the school is to provide this basis.

Educational Concepts

(B1 Nature of Education)

(B2 Scope of Education)

Newtown School District suggests that to attain complete development the individual must first acquire basic values, skills, and knowledge which can best be supplied through formal education. The school, in helping the individual master such basics, helps prepare the individual later to direct his or her own life. In this sense, it is the legal responsibility of the district to provide basic

Statement I - continued

(B3 Responsibilities and Limits)

educational services to all youth of school age and the moral responsibility to provide as fully as possible supplementary and enriching educational services to youth and adults.

(B4 Cultural Context)

The school will necessarily reflect the prevailing cultural characteristics of American society and of the district; hence, the school will teach about basic social, economic, and political relationships within society and thus prepare the individual to understand and eventually to enter fully into these relationships. In this way, the school develops individuals who can contribute to preserving basic American values.

(B5 Stability and Change)

The school will be organized to enhance the processes described above. Instruction designed to help individuals acquire basic values, skills, and knowledge will be given highest priority in the curriculum. Also provided will be opportunities which permit individuals to use what they have acquired. While individual schools will be organized differently in detail and individual students will necessarily develop in individualistic ways, common development in certain basic areas will be emphasized throughout the district. All schools should supply adequate instruction and facilities for the realization

(B6 Learning Environment)

Statement I - continued

of these purposes.

Although all members of the community share responsibility for educational decision making, much of this responsibility is exercised through the election of a school committee, which is directly responsible for the broad policy of the district's schools. The Superintendent of Schools as chief administrative agent for the committee will make most of the decisions affecting education after consultation with the public about matters of general concern and with the professional educators within the district about such matters as administration, selection of specific curricula, and organization of instruction. Such decisions should be in the interests of all members of the community and consistent with principles of personal and professional rights.

(B7 Rights and Responsibilities)

STATEMENT II

Philosophic Concepts

Newtown School District believes that education is essentially a process of discovering and testing the unfolding nature of truth. The individual does so primarily by acquiring habits of thoughtful action in social situations. By testing ideas in action the individual discovers what principles of value, conduct, and knowledge are useful in specific situations. Thus, the individual can personally interpret the meaning of reality as it evolves. By providing optimal circumstances for such individual development, the school provides the basis for the improvement of society.

(A6 Values)
(A7 Right conduct)
(A3 Knowledge)
(A1 Reality)
(A4 Society)

Educational Concepts

Newtown School District suggests that individual development is most likely to occur when the educational process is self-directed; or as nearly so as possible given the age, maturity, and developmental status of the individual. The school, as do other aspects of the environment, can help promote the continuous processes of development, principally by providing appropriate resources and careful suggestions by knowledgeable educators about how to develop and refine the interests of the individual. In this sense, it is the responsibility of the

(B1 Nature of Education)
(B2 Source of Education)

STATEMENT II - Continued

(B3 Responsibilities and Limits)

community to provide as full a range of resources and services--educational and otherwise--as possible to maximize the development of all citizens.

(B4 Cultural Context)

The school exists, therefore, in close contact with all aspects of American society and the society of the district. By analyzing prevailing social, economic, and political relationships, the school can develop means for improving culture.

(B5 Stability and Change)

(B6 Learning Environment)

The school will be organized to enhance the processes described above. A variety of resources and instructional methods will prevail, and students will be given maximum opportunity consistent with their capacities for self-direction and with their learning styles to try out, select, and modify all aspects of the educative environment. While individual development will be emphasized throughout the district, opportunities to develop cooperative programs within or between schools or between schools and community will be encouraged, as will many forms of cooperation and shared inquiry among students and teachers.

Statement II - continued

(B7 Rights and Responsibilities)

The district will encourage all citizens to share as fully as possible in the process of educational decision making. The district, therefore, will encourage channels of communication which permit professional educators to hear the wishes of all members of the community, including students, and all members of the community to hear the reasons of professional educators for decisions about programs and practices. The community will attempt to provide adequate support to educators, and educators will uphold standards of professional conduct. Adequate safeguards for the rights of all members of the community will be maintained.

ACTIVITY 5 - PREPARING A DRAFT

Objective: The committee will complete and evaluate a draft of the district's philosophy statement.

Responsible: The committee chairperson.

Activity 5 - Steps to be taken:

Any of three methods may be chosen by the chairperson prior to the meeting.

(1) Prepare a draft for committee discussion and reaction.

(2) Form subcommittees and assign each a task.

(3) General group discussion followed by group writing.

If the first method is chosen, the chairperson should write a draft and distribute it to committee members several days before the meeting. It should be emphasized in a cover letter that it is only a draft for the committee to react to. At the meeting each sentence should be discussed and rewritten if the committee feels it necessary.

If the subcommittee method is chosen, either (1) assign members or (2) allow them to choose. Two subcommittees will be formed. One will write a section focusing on basic philosophical concept statements; the other will focus on basic educational concept statements. Each subcommittee should elect a chairperson and decide how it wishes to proceed. A deadline of two or three weeks should be given. When the deadline arrives, the full committee is reconvened by its chairperson. At this meeting, each member should have a copy of what each subcommittee has written. Each subcommittee chairperson should "walk" the full committee through its section. The committee should then thoroughly discuss the sections. All three chairpersons should take careful notes of the discussion. These three people are responsible for preparing a complete draft and presenting it to the committee one week later.

If the full committee method is chosen, each of the seven basic

philosophical concepts and seven basic educational concepts presented in this package should be discussed individually. As each is discussed the chairperson should propose a statement which would then be discussed and refined by the committee. (A flip chart or overhead transparencies would be helpful to record the full statement as it is developed.) At the end of the discussion of the fourteenth concept, a full draft should be complete. The committee may wish to evaluate its draft against a standard such as the criteria listed on the next page.

The list does not include all criteria that might be applied, and a district might develop additional criteria of its own. Any specific statement will neither completely meet nor completely fail to meet all criteria. Criteria should not be used to accept or reject a specific statement but to weigh its merits and demerits.

ACTIVITY 6 - PUBLICATION OF DRAFT

Objective: The draft of the district's educational philosophy will be thoroughly published and disseminated along with notice of an open discussion on it.

Responsible: The committee chairperson

Activity 6 - Steps to be taken:

(1) A clear copy of the draft should be published in the community and student newspapers. Copies should be distributed to all school personnel and to all concerned educational and community organizations. In all cases it should be accompanied by a cover letter announcing the meeting discussed in (2) (below) and explaining exactly how people who wish to speak at this meeting can put their names on the agenda. People not able to attend the meeting should be encouraged to mail questions or comments to the chairperson.

(2) A meeting open to the public should be scheduled for approximately two weeks after the draft is distributed. It should be held in a large room. The agenda should include a reading of the draft and responses to it from individuals who formally request, in advance, or upon arrival, permission to speak.

SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR A STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The following criteria are one means of judging the adequacy of a district statement of educational philosophy. (DISPLAY TRANSPARENCY 11.)

(1) Are statements about values clear enough for determining goals and needs?

(2) Are the parts of the statement consistent with one another?

(3) Does the statement encourage reflective thinking? Can it be interpreted?

(4) Is the statement general enough to justify a number of specific programs or practices consistent with a democratic society?

(5) Is the statement detailed enough to permit judgment of the consistency of it with specific programs or practices?

(6) Is the statement reasonably clear and simple?

(7) Is the statement reasonably comprehensive?

(8) Does the statement reflect the reasonable and justifiable interests of most segments of the community?

(9) Does the statement provide for shared responsibility for the educational process?

(10) Is the statement consistent with the U.S. Constitution; federal, state, and local laws; and other widely accepted statements or principles of human rights and responsibilities?

(11) Is the statement consistent with the long-range interests of the district within an evolving society?

(12) Can the statement be modified over time?

(13) Does the statement permit individual schools or teachers to make consistent additions to it or to develop specific programs or practices consistent with it?

ACTIVITY 7 - COMMUNITY MEETING

Objective: To conduct an open community discussion about the draft of the district's educational philosophy.

Responsible: The committee chairperson

Activity 7 - Steps to be taken:

(1) Arrange for a suitably-large meeting room. All committee members will be seated at a long table in the front. Several microphones should be placed at the table and throughout the room.

(2) Designate one committee member to take notes.

(3) The chairperson opens the meeting by reading the draft and then recognizing one by one individuals who have requested permission to speak. Each speaker should be limited to three minutes.

(4) The audience should be provided with 3 x 5 cards on which to write questions.

(5) When all speakers have finished, the questions submitted by the audience should be answered.

(6) If time permits, others may be allowed to speak.

ACTIVITY 8 - PREPARATION OF FINAL DRAFT

Objective: To complete the district's philosophy statement in view of community reactions.

Responsible: The committee chairperson

Activity 8 - Steps to be taken:

(1) Prior to the meeting, the committee member who took notes at the public meeting and the chairperson should synthesize all community views, rewrite the statement accordingly, and distribute the revised draft to the committee.

(2) At the meeting each sentence in the draft should be reviewed and revised if the committee feels it necessary.

(3) The final draft should be evaluated by use of the criteria.

ACTIVITY 9 - REVIEW AND REVISION

The philosophy statement must be seen as an evolving document. When the needs assessment and goals selection phases of LPAP have been completed, the district LPAP committee must examine the goals, the needs assessment results, and the philosophy statement for consistency among the three. Where necessary, modifications in the philosophy statement and the goals must be made.

APPENDIX A:

Questions for Discussion of Basic Philosophical Concepts

Basic Philosophic Concepts

Because it is both difficult and time-consuming to achieve consensus about explicit statements of basic philosophical concepts, many districts may let these concepts remain implicit in the statements they adopt. Some of these concepts are listed here, however, for those districts which may wish to consider making them explicit.

(1) Reality. Is reality fixed or changing? Does reality exist "out there", apart from people's thinking or , at least in part, in the minds of individual people? Are things such as material objects, relationships, ideas, and feelings all equally real? How can one distinguish appearance from reality?

(2) Truth. Is truth determined by checking the accuracy of people's ideas against facts and events? Or, by checking the completeness and consistency of their ideas? Or, by checking the usefulness of acting upon their ideas? What is the relationship between truth and reality? Between truth and knowledge?

(3) Knowledge. Do people come to know primarily by having sense impressions (touch, taste, sight, smell, sound) of the word? By learning to think logically and coherently? By accepting the wisdom of authoritative or divine sources? By having deep feelings and convictions? What is the relationship between knowledge gained through sense impressions and knowledge gained through rational thinking? Is one kind of knowledge more dependable or more useful than another?

(4) Society. Is society a group of people working in terms of self-interest but held together by balanced power relationships? Or, a group of people working for the common good and held together by a shared culture or identity? What institutions and forms of government are necessary to a society? Can a society achieve consensus on value systems or forms of conduct?

(5) Human nature. Is human nature fixed or changing? Are humans basically rational or irrational? Peace-loving or violent? Is humankind naturally curious, or in need of external motivation? Self-directed, or in need of external control?

(6) Values. Are values fixed or changing? Do they apply universally or individually? Are they determined by an absolute standard? Or, by society? Or, by individuals? How are value systems manifested in personal choices, or in social institutions, or in cultural forms?

(7) Right conduct. Should behavior be guided by universal ethical principles? By laws? By conventions? By personal conscience? Must ethical principles and laws always be the same? Are there circumstances in which principles or laws should apply differently to different people?

APPENDIX B:

Questions for Discussion of Basic Educational Concepts

Basic Educational Concepts

Basic educational concepts deal with the nature of, the basis for, or the scope of education. They act as idealized expressions of what a district would like to have happen in and accomplish through its schools. These concepts can cover a variety of topics and be organized in a number of ways. Some samples are listed below.

(1) The nature of education. To what extent is the student responsible for his or her own education? To what extent is education a process of gaining agreed upon values, skills or disciplines? What constitutes a proper balance between informal and formal educational experiences? Should education be valued primarily for ends (outcomes and their usefulness) or means (educational experiences undergone and their intrinsic qualities)? How can education be organized to maximize the value of both ends and means?

(2) The scope of education. To what extent should education be a life-long process? When should formal education begin? What role should formal education play in the lives of adults? To what extent and when should education be academic or vocational, or for leisure? How can schooling prepare people to take advantage of educational experiences and opportunities outside school?

(3) The responsibilities and limits of a district in providing educational services. What are the legal and moral responsibilities of a district in providing educational services, especially for special interests or needs? What are the legal and moral limitations on the provisions of such services? How can educational services be distinguished from other social

services? Must a district consider "needs" as deficiences in individuals as measured by a common standard? Or, can needs be defined as individual?

(4) The cultural context for education. What are the basic social, economic, and political characteristics of American culture? How do these affect education in the district? What are the basic social, economic, and political characteristics of the district? How do these affect education within the district? To what extent is the culture of the nation or district uniform? To what extent diverse?

(5) The school as an agency of cultural stability and cultural change. To what extent do schools exist to preserve and transmit the prevailing culture of the nation, state, or district? To what extent do schools exist to improve prevailing culture? What is the proper balance between education meant to preserve and education meant to change the intellectual, social, economic, or political aspects of the culture? Which specific goals, curricula, practices, etc. tend to foster cultural stability? Which tend to foster cultural change?

(6) The school as a learning environment. How can schools be organized to enhance the processes of learning and human development? What are the purposes of the curriculum? Should all schools be organized alike, reflecting the same purposes and the same kinds of curricula? To what extent can differing values, cultural backgrounds, or learning styles be honored in any one school? What resources (physical and human) are necessary for maximizing the potential of schools as learning environments? Are schools pleasant places to live and work, as well as learn?

(7) Rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups within the educational process. To what extent is the process of decision-making within the district shared among the district's professional and lay people? To what extent can students share in decision-making? Who is responsible at what time for various aspects of the educational process? What are the responsibilities of individuals and the district as a whole to state and national authorities, and vice-versa? What are the rights of individuals to have support in carrying out their roles or to be free from interference in making appropriate individual decisions? When are individuals in schools responsible for contributing positively to the educational process? Or, are they responsible only for not infringing on the rights of others?